

die and leave infants who would become wards liable to forced marriages or to mulcts to avoid the same.<sup>1</sup>

404. Child marriage is due, then, to the predominance of worldly considerations in marriage, especially when the interests considered are those of the parents, not of the children; also to abuse of parental authority through vanity and self-will; also to superstitious notions about the other world and the interests of the dead there; also to attempts, in the interest of the children, to avoid the evil consequences of other bad social arrangements.

405. Cloistering. The custom of cloistering women has spread, within historic times, from some point in central Asia. The laws of Hammurabi show that, 2200 years B.C., men and women, in the Euphrates Valley, consorted freely and equally in life. Later, in the Euphrates Valley, we find the custom of cloistering amongst the highest classes. It became more and more vigorous amongst the Persians and spread to the common people. It was not an original custom of the Arabs and was not introduced by the Mohammedan religion. It was learned and assumed from the Persians.<sup>2</sup> Seclusion of women, to a greater or less degree, has prevailed in the mores of many nations. In fact, there is only a question of degree between an excessive harem system and our own code of propriety which lays restraints on women to which men are not subject. The most probable explanation of the customs of veiling and cloistering is that they are due to the superstition of the evil eye. Pretty women attracted admiration, which was dangerous, as all prosperity, glory, and preeminence were dangerous under that notion. When *pretty* women were veiled or secluded, the

custom was  
sure to spread to others. The wives and  
daughters of the rich  
and great were secluded in order to shield  
them from easy  
approach, and to pet and protect them. This  
set the fashion  
which lesser people imitated so far as they could.  
The tyranny  
of husbands and fathers also came into play, and  
another force  
acting in the same direction was the seduction  
exerted on  
women themselves by the flattering sense of  
being cared for

<sup>1</sup> Furnival, *Child-marriages*, XXVII, XXXIX, XL.

<sup>2</sup> Hauri, *Islam*, 131.